



Stockholm award for campaign on penal reform

By Janet Maitland

East Finchley resident Frances Crook has been awarded the Stockholm Foundation prize in Criminology for steering thousands of young people away from a life of crime.

Frances was chief executive of the Howard League, the oldest penal reform organisation in the world, for over 30 years. Established in the 1860s, one of their first achievements was to abolish public hanging.

When Frances started work at the Howard League in 1986, there were 3,500 children in prison in England and Wales and police were arresting a staggering 300,000 children every year. By the time she retired in 2021, there were just 500 child prisoners and annual arrests of young people had dropped to 70,000.

“When I first started, police were arresting children just for being annoying,” Frances told *The Archer*. “Being arrested is a conveyor belt to prison, and prison just makes children worse. The data showed that as the number of children sent to prison reduced, so did the levels of crime.”

“We identified pressure points to bring about change, one of which was the police. We provided each force with regular reports on their crime data, showing who was being arrested and what for, so it was clear what was happening and what could be done about it. “We also set up the HowardLeague as a law firm, which meant that we could use our own lawyers to stop children from

getting into the criminal justice system in the first place.”

Crime prevention

So what can be done about children today committing serious crimes such as assault and even murder? Frances said: “To prevent violence by children, mostly boys, from escalating, particularly in their late teens and early 20s, we need a complex patchwork of services that support troubled families and reduce drug-taking.

“And we need to work with boys to prevent violence against women and girls. I’m pleased about the materials for teachers recently announced by Sadiq Khan to help counter misogyny, intended for nine to 11-year-olds.” Frances also worked for Amnesty International and was twice elected a local councillor in Barnet. In 2010, she was awarded the OBE for services to youth justice.



Stockholm Prize: Frances Crook

Seasonal singalong for the festive season

Age UK Barnet will be holding a Christmas concert and singalong on Monday 9 December from 3.30pm to 5pm at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

There will be a festive singalong with free mince pies, spiced apple drink and

mulled wine, plus a raffle and a chance to buy Christmas cards designed by the Age UK art group.

To register, email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk or call Teresa on 07502 989 403.

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Party started: Levi Roots entertains at the Age UK centre. Photo Age UK Barnet

Stories of hope and resilience

By Karen Williamson

Age UK Barnet welcomed Dragon’s Den success story Levi Roots and other inspirational speakers to its Black History Month celebration on Monday 21 October, focusing on this year’s theme of reclaiming the narrative.

More than 100 people came to the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley to hear Levi speak about the importance of understanding our shared history. He said the Windrush generation were “entrepreneurs who saved the NHS and fixed a broken country which was struggling after the war”.

He also shared fond memories of growing up in Jamaica and moving to London, including how he experienced racism for the first time. “History is so important because it gives us a chance to understand ourselves,” Levi said.

“As one of my heroes, Marcus Garvey, once said: ‘Without knowledge of your past, you’re like a tree without roots.’”

Author Charlotte Oshi and her daughter, comedian and actor Andi Osho spoke about Charlotte’s recently published memoir, *The Jagged Edge*. This explores her journey to happiness after leaving Nigeria and an abusive marriage. “I wrote about how I learned to stand up for myself and how I got my life back,” said Charlotte. “It’s a story of hope and resilience that people can learn from.”

Anne Stennett, whose parents ran a newsagents in Finchley, spoke about how they were the driving force behind her ambition and success in becoming a partner at law firm Curwens Solicitors.

There was also a display of paintings by East Finchley resident and Age UK Barnet volunteer Eugene Turney. A former art teacher, Eugene was born in Jamaica, came to the UK in 1960 and completed his degree in fine art in the mid-1970s at the London Guildhall.

Face-painting friends flourish at wedding awards

By Amaya Shankardass

Face-painting business POW! Parties have become finalists in the prestigious Wedding Industry Awards, a competition that recognises the finest companies in the field from across the UK.



Sparkling: Friends Lyla, Eimer and Marie are getting noticed for their face-painting business

The team was shortlisted in the Best Newcomer category and will now vie for the Special Touch title. They are hoping to make it through their regional

round and advance to the national final in January.

POW! Parties was founded by Lyla, Eimer and Marie, three lifelong friends with a shared

passion for creativity and fun. They offer face-painting and glitter tattoos at corporate, children, and adult events, using only hypoallergenic, vegan, and gluten-free face paints, paired with biodegradable glitter.

They’ve worked in partnership with Watford and Southampton Football Clubs and with Holy Trinity Primary School in East Finchley.

Lyla Harris-Quinn, one of the co-founders and an East Finchley resident, established and led the company’s wedding services. “It’s been an incredible journey,” she said. “It’s truly an honour to be celebrated for doing what we love and making your special moments even more magical.” To find out more, visit

www.powparties.co.uk.